

123.
A
S E R M O N

Preach'd in the
Parish CHURCH
O F

H O L T, in *Worcester-shire*.

On *Sunday*, the 2^d Day of *Septemb.* 1705.

Upon the Death of

Mrs. *MERCY BROMLEY*,
Of Holt-Castle.

By GEORGE WALLS, D. D. Rector of that
Church, and Prebendary of *Worcester*.

L O N D O N :

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John Mountfort Bookseller, in *Worcester*. 1706.



To the worthily Honour'd *William Bromley, Esq;*
and *Mrs. Margaret Bromley* his Lady, the sorrowful
Parents of the valuable Party Deceased.

SUCH is the State of Men of my Profession, that we have
not only always our Parishes, but sometimes the harder
Task of a great part of Counties to please ; which has truly
been my Case : For Ours seem'd to think it had so much of
Death in the loss of this extraordinary young Woman, that
'twould not endure, that any thing relating to Her (however
deserving of it) should die besides. Hence 'twas, that my
Papers (as if I had been some great Criminal against the State)
were in a manner seiz'd, by the lawful Authority of my Coun-
try ; and by a severe Judgment upon 'em Sentenc'd to Live ;
and I am now become liable to answer for them, at the Bar of
every private House. But so unwilling was I to be thought
the first that ever misrepresented this Excellent Person to the
World, that, I can truly say, I parted with 'em (in the
manner I did with the valuable Subject thereof) with great
Regret, and much Trouble ; designing the Injury I had done
Her Memory should be kept very private (as if I had repent-
ed of it) had not some, that loved Her intirely, made it a
Publick Wrong ; and proclaimed what I spake in the Ear,
in the Closet, (within the Walls of a small Church) upon
the House top : Such Damage may we sometimes receive,
from our best Friends. But to cast no more weight upon
this Motive than it ought to bear, there was one which ought
to supersede more. I could not tell but God, in his wise
Providence, might please to compensate this short Life, by
lengthning Her time of Action, and permit this great Lover
of doing Good to be doing more here, whilst She was recei-
ving the Reward of what She had already done, in Heaven.

But one Part (I confess) I acted upon pure Choice, in pitching upon You for this Dedication ; and to have addressed it elsewhere, had been to have taken Your beloved Daughter from You a Second time ; an act of Severity I could not but tremble at the thoughts of. But lest I should be called to an Account, for the Wrong done, in not letting the World sooner know this wonderful young Woman was ever in it ; I appeal to Your many Charitable Visits, for the truth of my long Illness ; and which the World will be forward to believe to have been my state, by the Characters of Weakness upon this Performance.

That God will please to sanctify this grievous Affliction to You both ; and in such a manner bless and prosper the remainder of Your Families, that You may find all the Comforts in one Daughter, You promis'd Your selves in Two : Lengthen the Life of the Child, by adding those Days to it, it pleas'd his Wisdom to cut off from the Mother's ; take him under the same Conduct (that of his Blessed Spirit) She ever was ; and so fully instruct him what She had so well learn'd, that he may so perfectly resemble Her, in strict Performance of Her Duty to God, and Obedience to Her Parents ; that You may comfort Your selves with the belief, that Your dear Daughter is still with You, not yet gone to Heaven, is the earnest Prayer of,

S I R,
and
M A D A M,



Your Most Affectionate,
and Most oblig'd Humble Servant,

G E O R G E W A L L S.

PSALM XXXIX. iv.

*Lord make me to know mine end, and the measure
of my days, what it is, that I may know how
frail I am.*

Or as our Old Translation has the Words :

*Let me know mine end, and the number of my days,
that I may be certified how long I have to live.*

THE Words, as they stand in either Translation, seem at first view, to imply Holy David's Prayer, That God would please, some way or other, to discover to him the time of his Death ; vouchsafe him a particular Revelation of the number of his Days ; let him know when he was to go hence, and be no more seen : And to this Sense, a Learned Commentator gives his Paraphrase upon them : ' Lord, if it be thy Sacred
' Will, that I should be cut off by mine Enemies,
' that I should not long live to discharge that Office
' to which thou hast call'd me ; if for my Sins this
' be decreed against me, as one unfit to be farther
' imploy'd, or honour'd, or own'd by thee ; then
' be thou pleas'd some way to reveal this part of thy
' Will to me, that I may know what to expect, and
' accordingly which way to turn and prepare my
' self. But why I conceive, that the just meaning
of the Psalmist's Prayer is not exhibited to us in
this

A Sermon Preached at the

this Paraphrase ; and that he did not ask of God, that any such Revelation (concerning the precise time of his Death) should be made ; I shall endeavour to assign Reasons, in the Process of my Discourse. And though I dare not fall in with the hard terms of *Calvin's Charge* (whose Heart was sometimes hot within him, and the Fire burnt there too) who says, upon the Words of my Text, That * *David* here wanted Temper ; was in an Excess, and sinfully transported, in that he expostulates with God ; 'tis plain, the Holy Man was under great disturbance of Mind, and disquiet of Thought, about the Prosperity of wicked Men, and his own Sufferings from 'em, notwithstanding his strongest Resolves to the contrary ; as will evidently appear, from the beginning of the *Psalms* to the fourth Verse : Which a late Learned Writer having well consider'd, lets us into a more easy and rational Sense of 'em, than they seem to offer to us in our own Translations, or the Paraphrase before-mention'd ; and thus exhibits their meaning : ' Lord, I do not murmur, ' nor repine at my Sufferings ; but that I may be ' able to bear them still patiently, make me sensible ' (I humbly beseech thee) how short this frail Life ' is, and how soon it will have an end ; that duly ' considering this, I may be the less concern'd about ' the Miseries I endure, which will end together ' with it. And the Words thus understood, manifestly contain a most powerful Argument, for the quieting of our Spirits, and composing of our Minds, under any Difficulties of Providence, relating to the
Reasons

* *Hinc apparet perperam et vitioso excessu fuisse, abreptum, quia cum Deo Expostulat.* Calvin. in Loc.

Funeral of Mrs. Mercy Bromley.

Reasons of our Sufferings in this Life, by assuring us that our Deliverer is at Hand ; for if we bear in our Minds, that our Days are but a Span long, we have the just measure of our Troubles too.

I proceed now to shew Reasons, Why I cannot conceive, that *David*, in the Words of my Text, pray'd for an especial Revelation, that the precise time of his Death might be made known to him : which when I have assign'd, I shall consider the force of the Motive they, understood in this last Sense, contain, in order to a quiet Submission, and chearful Resignation of our selves to the Will of God, under the harshest Usage, and roughest Treatment, we may meet with in this World.

I. Then ; A Prayer conceiv'd in such terms, as to have the Revelation of the precise time of one's Death for the matter of it, is without Precedent, for ought appears in Scripture ; and hath no warrant from the Practice of any other good Man Recorded there.

II. Such a Revelation, if made to Men, would mainly prejudice the temporal Interests, and outward Prosperity of Mankind, and prove the greatest Obstruction to an orderly course of Business in the World.

III. Such a Discovery would not have that good Influence upon Religion neither, as some are apt to fancy it might.

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- Hezekiah*, 'tis true, had a Revelation from God, by the Prophet *Isaiah*, that his Days were numbred ; that he should set his House in Order, for he should die and not live : Tho' the Decree, upon his Prayer and Tears, was revers'd ; its Execution suspended Fifteen Years. But he that reads the Writing of *Hezekiah* (which is conceiv'd by *Grotius*, to be dictated to him by the Prophet, before he left the sick Man's Chamber) will find little reason to believe, that he ever made such a Discovery the subject matter of his Prayers. Hear the Agony of Complaint the dreadful News struck him into : *I said, in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave : I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living : I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent. I have cut off, like a weaver, my life : he will cut me off with pining sickness : from day even till night wilt thou make an end of me. I reckon'd till morning, that as a lion so will he break all my bones : from day even till night wilt thou make an end of me. Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter : I did mourn as a dove, &c.* This is not the Language of one that thought such a Revelation desirable, or so much as tolerable.
4. 6. And whereas St. Paul tells *Timothy*, that he was now ready to be offered ; and that the time of his departure was at hand : This was none of the Revelations he was, above other Apostles, priviledg'd with ; but a Knowledge he might easily, and in a more natural way, come by. For whether this second Epistle to *Timothy* was wrote at his first coming to Rome, when he was in so much danger of the mouth of the lion

(as Dr. Cave would have it) *at his first answer before Nero, when he says, No man stood with him, but the Lord stood with him, and strengthened him; or at his second coming thither, a little before his Martyrdom under that Tyrant, (as Eusebius, and the Antients, and many Moderns seem to be of Opinion). However this be, the Words relating to his being offered, and the time of his departure being at hand, might be utter'd by him, without any assurance from Revelation concerning the point of it; for 'twas easy for him to foresee his Death, the Sentence of which he long had in himself, being now in the Hands of this cruel Persecutor; for no less a Crime (amongst others of that Nature) than having Converted Poppæa Sabina (one of his Concubines) to the Christian Faith; an Offence never to be pardon'd by an Emperor, that rag'd and was mad with Lust, as well as Passion: But if this had never been his case, and he had not been a second time in the Mouth of this Lion, that he was sure would devour him; 'twas no very strange thing for such a one as Paul the aged (as he styles himself in his Epistle to Philemon) drawing near his Seventieth Year, and in the time of a general Persecution, to believe, and pronounce upon that Belief, that the time of his departure was at hand. Nay, he could scarce have believ'd otherwise, considering the course of Nature, and the state of Things; without the assurance of some Revelation to the contrary. And the like Account may be given of that Passage of St. Peter, where he says of himself, knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Which Words refer to the manner of his Death, by Crucifixion; and not to any precise time of it receiv'd from Revelation, as may appear from the 21st of St. John's Gospel,*

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John 21. 18,
19.

Gospel, to which the marginal Reference directs us ; where the Words stand thus, *When thou wast young thou girdedst thy self, and walkedst whither thou wouldest ; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not : And it immediately follows, This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.* So that if this be a parallel Place to that of St. Peter, (as our English Translators thought it was) the way only he should receive his Crown of Martyrdom in, is express'd in both.

But there was no need of a Revelation to inform him, that *he should shortly put off his tabernacle ;* for tho' I do not find it well agreed upon, what St. Peter's Age precisely was, 'tis more than probable, he arrived to a great one ; for besides that, much time was needful for the doing so much Business in, his great Master had charg'd upon his Hands ; and that Truth it self had foretold he should live to be Old ; Commentators impute St. John's out-running him, in their Race to our Saviour's Sepulchre, to the Disabilities of his Age for making more speed. Now if this was St. Peter's State at our Lord's Resurrection and he wrote this second Epistle in the *Mamertine* Prison, in the * 67th Year of Christ, i. e. 34 Years after, his great Age cannot reasonably be call'd in question. And then those eminent *Forerunners of our Faith*, being wiser and better Reasoners from the Premises of Age, to the necessary Conclusion [Death,] than we unhappily shew our selves to be, 'tis no wonder that St. Peter, without any Revelation should make the just Inference, concerning the near approach of his Death : Add to this, that he being now not only Nature's Prisoner, but Nero's too,

* Dr. Hammond. in Argument. Epist.

the time of a general Persecution, nay of a particular one also, for no less a Crime, than having, By his Prayers, compass'd the Death of his greatest Favourite, *Simon Magus* : What other Goal-delivery could he expect, but that from the Prison of his Body ?

The Argument then that I shall form, from my not being able to discover, that other good Men ever made any Prayer to God, for a Revelation of the precise time of their Death, for the fortifying my Opinion, that *David* did not make any such in the Words of my Text, is this ; That the lawful subject Matter of Prayer is to all Men the same : That the spiritual Wants they are liable to, are equal : That the Means of providing against 'em, are laid open, and made common to all good Men, by that God that can no more be a Respector of Souls than of Persons : That Men are alike under Obligation to pray for all necessary and profitable helps to Piety and Vertue : And therefore the Inference seems to be good ; That because it doth not appear, that any good Men in Scripture have conceiv'd and offer'd Prayers to this Effect, and for such Purposes ; there was good reason why they should not ; either from a belief that such Prayers were vain or presumptuous, or upon some other account faulty ; and consequently, that Holy *David* did not offer up any such in this *Psalms*. Nor may we have recourse to any thing peculiar and appropriate to his Person or Circumstances, that might exempt, and set him at liberty, from the common Laws and Boundaries of the Devotions of other good Men, or priviledge him to pray besides the Rule, and beyond the Warrant of their Faith and Practice. We find, indeed, many

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great and gracious Promises made to him, and to others for his sake ; astonishing Protections vouchsafed his Person, and wonderful Providences attending upon and watching over it ; whereby God *delivered David out of all his troubles* : But must he therefore let him into his hidden Secrets ; unfold the Decrees of Life and Death to him ? Must he, that *delivered his soul from death, and his feet from falling*, acquaint him of the precise time when they shall *stumble upon the dark mountains* ? Such Knowledge sure must be too wonderful for him, that the Son of David, as to his humane Nature, could not attain unto ; *for of that day and hour also knoweth no man ; no not the angels that be in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father !*

II. Such a Revelation would mainly prejudice the temporal Interests, and outward Prosperity of Mankind ; and prove the greatest Obstruction to an orderly course of Business in the World.

For 'tis certainly much for the temporal Felicity, and present Advantage of the World, that Men put the evil Day far from them ; (tho' 'tis a most fatal Miscarriage to the Persons themselves that do so) that God has so ordered things, in reference to the time of Men's going hence, as to leave 'em under a Possibility of deceiving themselves, by believing well and hoping comfortably of the Duration of Life, notwithstanding all the Rebates of those mortifying Characters of Frailty and Uncertainty it lies under : For should it be otherwise, and were the fatal Hour laid open, the Warrant sign'd for Execution-day, to be read by all the Sons of Adam, under their Father's Condemnation ; What a wretched miserable World should we have to live in ? Negligence would suffer the

the Briars and Thorns to grow and multiply, which Original Sin had planted in the Earth : Labour and Industry would fail, Contrivance and Improvement be at an end. Our Designs would be but narrowly laid at first, or soon be dropt and dash'd in pieces again, by such an amazing Discovery. There would be no such things as great Projectors, and brave Undertakers in the World. The Mind would contract it self, shrink up, and become too strait for Enterprize, and too confin'd for Discovery. All the free and generous Sallies of Men's Thoughts, whereby the Understanding opens and enlarges it self to take in the Treasures of Knowledge, would be repress'd, and beaten back : Invention cramp'd, Curiosity stopt, Arts and Sciences lye undiscover'd : A damp would fall upon Business, and a deadness upon Trade ; and Men's pursuit of both would be manag'd with so little Zeal and Vigour, carried on with so much Coldness and Indifference, as if they were almost Dead too. The Interests of Civil Societies would be wholly disregarded, or but negligently applied to. Men would not be so useful in their Stations, or serviceable to the Publick ; for there's a Freedom of the Spirit necessary to make it a publick one ; and great Actions can never be supported and maintain'd, under the constant Discipline, and insufferable Weight of great Fears ; and Men can make no speed, nor move to any purpose, with such heavy Chains, and with such a Load of Fetters upon 'em as these : So that if we will but allow the Preservation and Welfare of the World to be the Care of God's Wisdom, as the Making of it was the Effect of his Power, we must justify his way of dealing with us, in reference to the Uncertainties he has left us under,

as to the time of our going hence ; for if he that numbers our Days had taught us to count 'em too, and let us know precisely when the Reckoning would be up, he had defeated his own Expectations from us, and disturb'd the State and Order of Things he had settled by the Appointments of his Wisdom. Men would not be so great in their Professions, nor so considerable in their Callings : The free course of their Thoughts, necessary to useful Enquiries and successful Studies, would by this means be check't, and interrupted : The frightful Prospect would drive 'em back from all other Advances, and the knowledge when the Day was, wou'd scarce let 'em know any thing else : Shed such a fatal Ignorance upon the Desk and the Pulpit, and scatter so much Darknes about the Bar and the Bench, that Men would be forc'd to grope for Truth and Justice, without being able to find either. And if there were a Book of Death (as there is one of Life) in which our Names were written, that lay always open before us, we should be apt to be ever poring there ; and so to dwell upon the sad Contents of it, as to read nothing else, and become no wiser than that useless Book could make us. Besides, if Death was strip't of all its Darknes, and expos'd to our view, our natural Obligations would be very imperfectly discharg'd, by us, our Families not in due manner provided for ; and what an admirable Revelation would this be, that would make us worse than Infidels ? The continuance of the World would not sufficiently be taken care of ; nor the Propagation of Mankind so well proceed in the Order it now does ; for Men would not be so forward to enter those Societies by which Succession is maintain'd and provided for :
Make

Make choice of a conjugal State, which they foresaw a speedy, fix't, and certain Dissolution of ; and so leave the helpless Remains of a miserable Family, to the inhospitable Treatment of an uncharitable, mischievous, and injurious World : For though God's Providence, as well as *his Mercies*, is over *all his Works* ; 'tis Presumption, designedly to cast more upon that Protection, (as great and secure as 'tis) than necessity requires ; as all would do, that knowing their Death is near, from the Assurance of Revelation, would begin to build and raise up a Family, when they knew they were falling themselves : So that tho' God should please to vouchsafe such a Discovery to some few Men, for particular Ends and hidden Reasons in his Providence ; such a Revelation ought not to become the subject Matter of our Prayers, or any thing to be ask'd of God ; the Knowledge of which would affect the World in so injurious a manner, that would narrow the Capacities, and curb the Powers of our Minds, fetter our Thoughts, and make 'em uncomfortable to our selves, and useless to others ; make us neither wise nor profitable in our Generations ; strip our Spirits of the great Qualification that can commend 'em, all Care and Concern for the Publick ; that would pull us back from (the Rewards of Vertue) Riches and Honour ; entail Ignorance and Poverty on the World, and run counter to, and thwart the Benediction of God himself upon the First Man and Woman, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the Earth.*

III. Such a Revelation would not have that good Influence upon Religion neither, as some are apt to fancy : For 'twould make bad Men worse ; and hinder the happy Progress of good Men too.

157, 'Twould

1st, 'T would make bad Men worse : For if they can once find *the evil Day put far from 'em* ; and that their last Sun is not to Set till after Seventy, or perhaps Fourscore Years, they'll find another use for the many intermediate ones, than to employ 'em only in melancholy Subserviencies to the last, and so make those *Evil* too. If their *Lord* will so long *delay his coming*, they may (they think) yet misuse *their Fellow-servants*, and alter their Conduct time enough in the House. If the Bridegroom will come so late, why should they go out to meet him, so long before the time appointed for his coming ? They will Husband their Time better, and their Money too, than lay it out in a dead Purchase ; and count it a Folly in any Virgins, to buy their Oil too soon, next to that of buying it too late. The time for Repentance would probably be post-pon'd, and the Nature of it mistaken ; and they would not be solicitous for the signing of their Peace with God, till the last Day allotted 'em for their coming in. So that such a Revelation made by God, would let Men loose from his Service the greatest part of their Lives ; and beget false Opinions in 'em concerning the necessity of Religion, till such a time as the Practice of it can do 'em no good. But

2^{dly}, Such a Revelation would be likely to hinder the happy Progress of good Men themselves, in their course of Piety and Vertue.

For most of the Christian Vertues would be in danger of being lost, and crush'd in pieces by the weight of Sorrow, swallow'd up in Prayers, waisted away in Sighs, or drown'd in Tears : The contemplative Duties of Religion would be apt to dismiss, and shut out the active ; and the heaviness of Speculation

culatation incapacitate for the Liberty and Freedom of Practice. They would be so taken up in the Closet, that all other Business of the House would be little regarded, if not quite neglected by 'em ; and they would be so earnestly intent upon the striking of the last fatal Hour, that they would little consider how the other parts of their Day, in which they should provide for it, pass away. The Order of the Mind (that is necessary to a right and equal discharge of its Obligations) would hereby be subverted ; and the Subserviency of the Affections to each other (which is ever requisite to the Regularity of its Operations) displac'd and taken away. Some of the most wakeful Passions of the Soul would take the dreadful Alarm, and start up ; become so restless themselves, that they would let nothing else be quiet, or usefully employ'd there. Fear, that (whilst in its proper Station, and within its just Bounds, mainly assists the Soul in all her important Business, and has an Hand in every thing she does well) flies out upon the amazing Prospect, and puts every thing into Confusion ; hinders all rational Performance, and renders her whole Powers useless and unprofitable. In the Tumult and Disorder she falls into, at the near approach of this last Enemy, she is so disabled from making any due Preparations to meet him, that her Weakness then chiefly betrays it self ; for the Mind that has lost its Order, consequently has its Strength too ; for when the Distinction of its Thoughts is gone, they fall foul upon and destroy themselves ; its Acts undermine each other ; the Fears of it are too many and too big for its Cares ; its great Hurry does no Business, and all its Motion makes no way. So that the Wisdom of God, in order to make Death most useful to the best of Men, could not otherwise have dispos'd of it than he has

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done : For to be assur'd, that it must once come, and to be as certain that at any time it may, is enough to strike as much awe upon the Mind as it can well bear ; and is sufficient to impress Fear upon the Spirit, as deep as is agreeable to the Ends of all Religious Fear ; which is to dispose us to do our Duty carefully, and with the Consistency of the Parts of it to each other. More sight of Death than this we need not have, we cannot bear ;

Act. 1. 7. 'tis not for us to know the times and seasons of it, which the Father has put in his own power. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us, we cannot attain unto it : 'Tis too usefess to be desir'd by us, it edifieth not ; 'tis too dangerous for our State ; we may not be able to support our selves, or do our Duty under it. Such a Revelation is not to be coveted by us ; such a Discovery to be sought after, that may let in Amazement with the Light it brings, and astonish with the Information it gives us ; for to be acquainted of the Day, when we shall meet the cruel Enemy, and the point of time we must fall by his Hand, would prove a notice too dispiriting and full of Horror, that we should faint in our Advances towards him ; have the sting of death always in us, the sorrows of it encompassing us about, and through fear of death, we should be all our life-time subject to bondage. There is no good use to be made of the Knowledge of the just number of our Days, but what may be made without it, if we please ; and the state we are in gives us all the Motives to prepare and be ready for Death, that our Natures are capable of profiting by ; and to have a farther Revelation may make our Lives less comfortable, but adds no Peace or Consolation to our Deaths : And such a Discovery, if granted to our Prayers, might give us reason to repent of our Curiosity as well as of our Sins. Which brings me to consider,

Lastly,

Lastly, The force of the Motive contain'd in the Words, understood as a Prayer of *David's*, that God would please to make him sensible how frail this short Life is, and how soon 'twill have an end, in order to dispose us to a quiet Submission, and chearful Resignation to his Will, under the harshest Usage and roughest Treatment we may meet with in this World.

And if this one Consideration were well rooted in our Minds, and settled in our Spirits, 'twould so quiet and compose them under all the cross Accidents of Life, that 'twould supersede the whole *Art of Contentment*; render the Treaties of Consolation useless; and at once dismiss all the Rules of the Philosophers, for the Government of our selves under the pervershest Conduct of a vexatious World. For to bear in our Thoughts, that tho' our Enemies encompass us round, we have a certain Deliverer at Hand, that will soon rescue us from the troublesome Enclosure: That we have a Balsam within our reach, that will speedily heal all the Wounds they can give us; and a Death in near Prospect, that will infallibly allay their Rage, and for ever cool the Inflammation of 'em: That our Frame cannot bear much, nor our Life long: That the stroke is making at us that no other blow can follow, is not only enough to make us quiet, but insulting too; to despise and mock at the Impotency of that Rage that must so soon be spent, can never trouble us more. Since God then has given us such a Make and Frame, that will presently free it self from all the Spite and Cruelty of our Persecutors; and no Oppressor can lie long upon us, because we are not; nor very heavily neither, since our Composition is such, that we shall be crush't in pieces by the Load: Since our Resting-place the Grave is near, whither he cannot follow us; nay, is desperately afraid

to come : Since the Torments the Devils of this World can inflict, are far from an eternal Duration, and so different from what they themselves are like to suffer for their so doing : Since many Arrows of wicked Men, how skilfully soever directed, cannot fall within an Hand's breadth of the compass of our Days ; and we need not fear the contrary Winds that blow against us, since the *Vapour* (which St. James stiles our Life) by any strong Blast must vanish away : We ought not to be ruffled, or much disordered by such Afflictions, as the Apostle could not find a measure in *time* for ; and therefore says, they *are but for a moment* ; and carry this good Reason with 'em against any Complaints, that they cannot long be complain'd of.

And as this Consideration of our Frailty, duly impress'd upon our Minds, would be mainly instructive of our Passive Duties ; 'twould furnish us with equal Motives to our active ones also ; for if we have so short a time to work in, we should not only not be idle, but be filling up the little space, not only with such a number of good Actions as 'twill possibly take, but with those of the best kind, and highest quality : Sow our small spot of Ground not, barely, with as much Seed as 'twill bear, but of the prime choicest sort too. We should take off the Reproach that is cast upon our Life, by those mean and low Comparisons of it, to a Shadow, Vapour, vain Shew, &c. by evidencing what great things may be done in it ; and shewing how much 'tis capable of ; and that as short as our Day is, *our Salvation may be work'd out* in it, and our whole Business done before the Night comes. Thus we shall be ever in our Arms, and so always prepar'd against any Surprise from the last Enemy. Then *David's Prayer*, without any new Revelation, (in the best and highest Sense

Sense 'tis capable of) is granted us; we know our end, and that 'twill be a blessed and glorious one. We have pray'd with *David*, and shall praise with *David* too; bear our parts in the great, endless Hallelujah, with all the chief Musicians, and Royal Psalmists of the Heavenly Quire.

Tho' I have done with my Text, there yet remains a great Particular to be spoken to; and since She that is Dead yet speaketh, 'tis not only a Warrant to the Living to do it, but a Reproach of their Injustice to be silent upon the great Occasion. I confess, I never had the Skill, or thrifty Management, to get a Stock of Characters ready made by me (as the Men of Trade have some Funeral Garments for Bodies of all Sizes) to bestow indifferently and at random, upon any that had occasion for 'em. And there seems to be such an admirable Variety in eminently Vertuous Persons, that nothing can become them so well, as what is made expressly for them. Leaving therefore such of my Profession as deal this way, to the ease of their good Husbandry, in dressing all the Dead (as if they were paying Obedience to the Act of Parliament) in the very same Materials; I shall endeavour so to suit this small part of her Character, to the valuable Party for whom 'tis design'd, that those that read it (and knew her) may say 'twas made only for her; and as exactly fits her, as the Cloaths that (whilst living) she wore; and that the little I have offer'd upon the Occasion, has been with that Truth she ever delighted to speak.

I know it has been Customary upon these Occasions, (when the Quality of the Subject so well bears it) to act the Herald's part, before that of the Divine; and for the Preacher to give an account how well the Party

ty deceased was Born, before he does how well he had Liv'd. But I take this Usage to be an unseasonable Sacrifice to some Family or Relations ; a Lecture of Pride read in the Face of the mortifying Spectacle, and a reminding them of *their Honour* when they see it *lying in the Dust* ; but wholly foreign to the proper Business of a Funeral Sermon : Which I conceive to be this, to give such Accounts of the Dead as the Living may profit by ; to point out the Way they went to Heaven, and press Men's following them in it, that they may come thither also. But what Advantage can any Man make, in order to the other World, from being told, That the excellent Person that lately left us, deriv'd in a direct Line from the truly Noble Lord Chancellor *Bromley* ? (a Minister well becoming the Reign of so great a Queen.) Nay what use in order to this ? Since those that heard, or shall read this Discourse, would not have their Families one jot rais'd by it, but would retain just the same Quality they had before. But She had Light enough of her own to shine by, (without borrowing any from the Lustre of her Family which could so well spare it) that *of her good Works, which Men seeing, might glorify their Father which is in Heaven.* And to make amends for my not recounting her natural, earthly Pedigree ; I shall take notice of her higher Descent, her more Noble Extraction, her Spiritual and Heavenly Parentage.

She was born of God ; and a Child so beloved of her Heavenly Father, that 'twas not his Pleasure She should live longer out of his own House, but took her from a World She had overcome, at a time of Life, before others begin to fight against it ; to one, where She was to triumph after her Victory and Reign for ever with her Lord : And She had given the fullest

Proofs

Proofs of her near Alliance to her Blessed Saviour too ;
 for *whosoever does the will of his Father, the same is his* Mat. 12.
sister, and brother, and mother. She had the shortest ^{50.}
 Childhood perhaps, that most Women have past thro':
 (*When she was a Child, not speaking as a Child, understand- 1 Cor. 13.*
ing as a Child, or thinking as a Child ; but even then, ^{11.}
having put away childish things,) and became a great
 Example of Piety and Vertue to the World, at an Age
 at which others are scarce known to be in it ; and by
 the wonderful speed She made in her Journey, gave
 Evidence what a fair Race may be run, in that small
 part of Eighteen or Nineteen Years, which is capable
 of any useful Improvement ; and before most others
 can make themselves ready, so much as to enter upon
 theirs. By the earliest Dedication to Heaven, She
 seem'd (like the Child mention'd Rev. 12.) *caught up to*
God as soon as born, and by that means secur'd from *the*
Dragon that was ready to devour her. And having be-
 gun well, and set out right, She did not (like some un-
 wary Travellers) go out of her way, at the first Turn-
 ing that led off from it, but maintain'd the straitness of
 her Course till she had happily finish'd it. God had
 been pleas'd to bestow natural Graces upon her Person
 with such a liberal Hand, that Man could not but love
 her ; and so enrich'd her Mind with such Spiritual ones,
 that he himself could not but delight in her ; and these
 were so well grown in that little space of time they had
 to live in from their first planting, that shew'd the Soil
 was very rich and good ; the early Births and first
 Productions of her Soul (like those of young Trees)
 being Fruits of the fairest kind and largest size : And
 had we made our Observations wisely, we had not
 promis'd our selves so long an Enjoyment of her, as the
 Flattery of our Hopes gave us : Since there were so many
 Marks

Marks and Characters of God's Property stamp'd upon her, as might have given us just reason to conclude, She would be soon call'd for by her great Owner.

Her Understanding open'd and grew so fast, that it seem'd not long design'd for this State of Darknes, but fram'd for that which is all Noon-day, pure Light, perfect Knowledge and Vision. There was a becoming Reservedness observable in her Temper, a decent shutting in of herself upon occasion; which shew'd there was something valuable within that deserved such a Guard; there being seldom any thing worth the keeping lodg'd in those Rooms, the Doors of which stand always open.

If ought happen'd to be done amiss in the Family, her Charity had a Veil always at Hand, to cover it with. This ready Advocate was ever provided of something to say in behalf of the worst Cause; and was such a Lover of Innocence, that she would search for it, and was desirous to find it, even where 'twas not: And tho' She had yet no separate Family, She had Cares that were so; and so well employ'd them to the Spiritual Advantage of the Retainers to her Person, as if She believ'd their Souls were hers too. But this Sphere was too narrow for her active Pious Soul to move in; and therefore the whole Parish shar'd in her good Offices: And when others of her Rank and Age mispent their Time in idle and insignificant Visits (to say the best of them) She husbanded hers to useful Visitations, entring the meanest, homeliest Habitations of the Sick and Needy; and by a *Charity that endureth all things*, frequently took up in those no very agreeable Mansions; where, by the different Ministries of her Hand, Heart, and Tongue, She brought Comfort and Light also, to those Habitations of Misery and Darknes. When She
had

had brought any Infant to Baptism, She did not leave it at the Font too, (like many that forsake and renounce the Child at the same time, that in its Name they do its Spiritual Enemies) nor think it enough to give it a Christian Name, unless She did a Christian Practice too; and took a more conscientious Care of the vertuous Education of her adopted Spiritual Children, that most do of those of their Flesh : So much better does Grace discharge its Obligations than Nature.

When ought was to be amended in some young Gentlewomen of her Acquaintance, and her Age did not give her the Authority of a decent Reprover ; this young Reformer would depute a good Book to do the Christian Office for her ; and artfully lead them to the place of it, where the Lesson to be learnt lay ; and so took care, that they might read that Duty which they could not so decently, or with so good effect hear from her Mouth.

Notwithstanding the very plentiful Spring of her Fortune in her own Family, and the large Streams that flow'd into it from her Marriage, the great Affluence and mighty Abundance that surrounded her, came not so near her as to do her harm ; was so far from affecting her Mind, that it did not reach even her Body ; and She thought her self best distinguish'd from others, when her Apparel was more modest than theirs ; delighting her self chiefly in that most becoming Dress, and richest of all Attires, *the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great Price.* 1 Pet. 3.4. And when the Inclinations of others, rather than her own, lead her to Town, She seem'd to think that the Play-house made no part of it : Such Care did She take scarce to be seen, where so many of her Sex, Age and Quality, in a manner dwelt. Nor did She go thi-

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ther to forget the Country, or her self ; to be at a distance from the Abodes, and out of reach of the Expectations of the Tenants, or hearing of the Cries of the Poor there ; (the no very laudable Motives that bring many of prime Quality and Fortune to Town, and keep them there) but wisely to chuse out of the great variety: that was presented to her there, what was fit to carry away with her, and would render her most useful at her return.

But to come to what was more immediately transacted betwixt God and her devout Soul : She was such a constant frequenter of the Closet, that at home She was a great Example to the whole Family ; and of the Church, that She became such to the whole Congregation. She Heard (as I have often observed with Comfort) with that Reverence, as became the Word of God ; and with such Attention, as if I had been speaking only to her self. And having acquitted her self so laudably in a lower Form in Christ's School, She was desirous to be examin'd, in order to her removal to an higher, that of the Communicants ; for She that had so much delighted in her Saviour's Doctrine, could not but long for his Body and Blood ; and became a remarkable Instance, how soon the Wedding-garment may be made ready by such as set themselves to work upon it in earnest ; for I never admitted to the Holy-Table, at any age, with more Satisfaction, than I did her at Fifteen : She being well qualified for the Digestion of this strong Spiritual Food, when others, of far more Years, are *but Babes in Christ, fit only for the Milk of the Word.* And when She had once *tasted and seen how good the Lord was*, upon the Holy Altar ; She was so delighted with the high relish and blessed sight, that She never let slip one opportunity (that I remember)

ber) of presenting herself there ; but thought her monthly as necessary as her daily Food. And here her Devotions were even and steady ; Her Body kept pace exactly to the holy Motions of her Mind, but never out-went them ; and whatever her Face (as well as her Mouth) spake, was *out of* no other *Abundance* than that of *the Heart*. At these great and solemn Acts of Religion, her Countenance was grave, compos'd, and serious ; but not much distinguish'd from it self, by such Impressions as the Fervours of some good Men and Women's devout Souls make in theirs ; and She hid her Devotion, whilst She duly exercis'd it, as far as 'twas consistent with the great Sincerity of it to lye conceal'd.

She discharg'd every Relation She stood in so well, and so fully answer'd the Obligations of it, that She *ow'd no Man any thing*. She was a Daughter so strictly Dutiful, and in a peculiar manner Obedient to her Parents, that She obey'd their very Inclinations, before they could discover themselves in the awful dress of a Command ; and never griev'd them but once (and when 'twas impossible too, longer to please) that was, when She left them.

She knew how to manage Friendship, to the true Ends and best Purposes of it, so early, (which few live long enough to learn) that She had her useful Correspondents at a time of her Life, at which others knew nothing beyond Play-fellows : And She gave fuller Proofs, and made better Evidence of her Prudence, wise Conduct, and conjugal Affection, in the compass of less than Thirteen Months, (the whole time She was permitted by God to become a great Example in the State of Wedlock) than some Marriages (and very happy ones too) have produc'd, during

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a long Cohabitation ; and lov'd the proper Object of her Affection in such a manner, with such Decency and Discretion, as at the same time to shew She hated Folly.

But having taken notice how laudably She acquitted her self in all her other Relations, I would to God I could tell you, what Mother She had been too ; but he that was pleas'd to bless the Family in making her one, thought not fit in his Wisdom to let our Knowledge go any farther ; but took her to that blessed Place, where they neither Marry, nor are given in Marriage ; where the Cares, and the Name of a Mother both cease ; where all Tears are wip'd away from her Eyes, which fill and so overflow ours ; *to the City of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem ; and to an innumerable Company of Angels. To the general Assembly, and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven ; and to God the Judge of all (and Absolver of her self.) To the Spirits of just Men made perfect ; and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant ; and to the Blood of Sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel ;* in which She was wash'd, and presented without Spot to God ; and now for ever cloath'd in that white Rayment, which She so delighted in here, follows the Lamb whither soever he goes ; which, if we follow her, we shall do also.

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